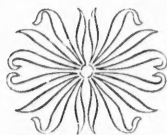


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THE
MANITOBA COLLEGE LITERARY
SOCIETY.



A New Nation

OR

“The First Quarter-Century
— of the Dominion.”

BEING THE PRESIDENT'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS.



BY

REV. GEORGE BRYCE, LL.D.,

HONORARY PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.



Given before the Society
November 3rd, 1893.

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A NEW NATION.

"FIRST QUARTER CENTURY OF THE DOMINION."

BY DR. BRYCE.

An Interesting Retrospect—A Patriotic and Hopeful Forecast of the Future—Past Achievements in National Advancement—Brilliant Possibilities.

The Literary society of Manitoba College met in the spacious Convocation hall of the college. The society is the most popular among the college organizations and its meetings are well attended. At the close of the literary programme which had been provided, the honorary President of the society, Rev. Dr. Bryce, gave the inaugural address for the college year, 1893-4, on "The first quarter century of the Dominion." He spoke as follows:—

"In the year 1867 the Dominion of Canada was born. The writer well remembers the beginning of confederation as it was the year in which he graduated in Toronto University. During the years which preceded that date the question of Canadian union was much discussed, and the literary society of Toronto University took its full share in debating the proposal. The writer recalls great debates on confederation, in which were students, whose names are now familiar as judges on the bench, members of Provincial and Dominion parliaments, professors in the seats of learning, leaders of the medical profession, and prominent clergymen of the several churches. In these debates the burden of argument was against confederation. A few persons of wider view and more sanguine temperament prophesied of the glory yet to be, but the great majority doubted the utility of the movement, and cared little for its accomplishment. No doubt this arose partly from the fact that confederation was

A POLITICAL NECESSITY.

The lower provinces were the first to move for a maritime union. This was for the purpose of reducing the expense of government, and of bringing the provinces into closer sympathy. The inland province with its two portions of upper and lower Canada had reached a deadlock in its affairs. Ministry after ministry had fallen. Eastern and Central Canada with Quebec and Montreal as centres were pitted against the growing west, which looked to Toronto for leadership. The solution of difficulties, which had been

promised by the constitution evolved from the fertile brain of Lord Durham and which had prevailed from 1841, had not been attained, although looking at the Canada of 1867 and comparing it with that of 1841, no one could call the union a failure. In addition, at the time immediately before confederation, the reciprocity treaty, which had been in force since 1854, had been terminated by the United States, and great uncertainty prevailed in the minds of Canadians, as to the future of trade. Besides Canada had a few years before sent expeditions to explore Rupert's Land, with the thought of increasing her territory, but the difficulties of Hudson's Bay company occupancy seemed to stand in the way.

The Canadian sentiment as to confederation was far from being hopeful. Upper Canada feared that its numbers and standing were such that partnership with the other provinces would result in its being compelled to support the weaker members. Such men as Matthew Crooks Cameron, one of the purest of Canadian public men, and John Sandfield MacDonald, one of the shrewdest of Canadian politicians, opposed the union. Moreover Nova Scotia, led by Howe, her favorite son, had been alienated by the method of bringing confederation about, and even opposed the British North America bill before the Imperial parliament. When the first Dominion day, 1st of July, 1867, came, faces were dull, spirits were low, the powder was damp and enthusiasm was wanting. The times were discouraging, and the wiseacres declared that the remedy for the political troubles of Canada was worse than the disease. The general apathy was quoted as an evil omen.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF CONFEDERATION.

The task undertaken by the first ministry under confederation was a difficult one. Nova Scotia was hostile, the maritime provinces were afraid of the overpowering influence of the west, New Brunswick soon had a "school case," which roused religious feeling, the North-

west entered confederation with the Riel rebellion to be dealt with, British Columbia was shy to the approaches of her trans-alpine suitor, and Prince Edward Island was the last of the provinces to enter confederation, taking six long years to consider the matter.

The vast extent of the Dominion, after its completion in 1873, stretching as it did from Charlottetown to Victoria, in what Mr. Goldwin Smith called a fringe along the northern boundary of the United States, involved a wide divergence of interest. Fishermen and sailors, farmers and miners, mountaineers and prairie settlers, villagers and urban dwellers, all made their special demands. To these were added prejudices and feelings arising from differences in origin, language or creed. Probably no statesmen of any country ever faced more real difficulties than those which met the Canadian ministry in the first decade of confederation.

The writer was never in political sympathy with the late Sir John Macdonald, but it is only just to say, that for a divided, inharmonious, and clamorous group of provinces perhaps no man could have been better fitted for healing divisions, and proposing from time to time a "modus vivendi" than he. Sir John's greatest quality was undoubtedly his patriotism, and his adroit and skilful management of men, and sections, and provinces was all required to solve the difficult questions, ever rising like spectres before the young Dominion.

VISION OF A NORTHERN EMPIRE.

Probably few politicians appreciate the work they are doing at its true value. Usually they aim only at meeting the immediate necessity, at overcoming the present difficulty. Amidst all their failures and shortcomings a fair-minded critic will be able to say, "They builded better than they knew." But there were not wanting Canadians, who early in the days of the Dominion, entertained the hope of a great northern empire on this continent. It was the old vision, with which many of the refugees from the United States, after 1783, came to the wilds of Canada, and declared their belief and hope in an united empire. With the tyrannical views of the U. E. loyalists we may not sympathize, but their faith in a great empire on the north of the American continent shames many of their descendants and successors a century nearer the fulfilment of this vision.

True patriotism shines forth most brightly amid the surrounding gloom of pessimism. Happy is the man who can with courage see beyond the obstacles to the fulfilment of his dream. It is not a difficult thing at the close of the first quarter century of the Dominion to be able to say, the prospect of a nation—British and loving Britain—in North America is now clearly in sight. In saying this the writer would not give comfort to the pestilent tribe of politicians, on either

sides of politics, who try to gain a party advantage by crying out that the country is prosperous because they are in power, or that that the country is going to ruin because they are not in power. Canada to-day, does not depend on either political party for her place and standing as a rising nation.

THE POLITICAL CONCEPTION.

To the patriot, whose aim is the highest good of his native land, there seems no gain in discussing whether we should prefer annexation, independence or the present status of Canada.

Annexation is an impossibility from many different standpoints. There is little reference to it this year in our newspapers, there is no great desire for it on the part of the United States, no political party or section of a party in Canada shows any tendency toward it. It would mean the extinction of our hereditary sentiments, it would be asking us to adopt modes of life and customs very distasteful to us. It is at present questionable whether annexation would even be a financial advantage to us, and it would on the whole give us less freedom of action than we at present enjoy. No! the question of annexation is hardly practical enough even to enjoy the attention of a juvenile debating society.

Nor does independence seem at all a pressing question. Why discuss now what our condition will be in 1993? Who would have the temerity to forecast what a century at this age of the world's history would bring forth? An increase of responsibility without any corresponding advantage, a great expense in maintaining defence and a foreign diplomatic service, an invitation to other nations to regard us as rivals, a quadrennial turmoil such as is seen in the United States on the election of a chief ruler, and the regarding of Great Britain as a foreign nation instead of the sun and shield she has been to us—all this is what independence would mean.

BRITISH CONNECTION IS SATISFACTORY.

Our position as a dependency, and the favorite dependency of Great Britain, has enabled us to advance greatly in the quarter-century of our Dominion history. As against Great Britain we have not a single grievance. She sends us a chief ruler, whose personal character and fitness make us receive him with enthusiasm, she bestows honors on our statesmen who distinguish themselves at home or in the service of the empire, she gives us the benefit of her legal wisdom in the highest court of the empire, the privy council; she pours her money out to construct our railways, to build up our cities, and establish our growing institutions, her churches send large annual gifts for the development of the higher phases of life among us, her literature is our literature, her victories are our victories, her hopes are our hopes,

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and her peace and prosperity are objects of highest solicitude to us. No! we need no change of system. We are not cramped, dwarfed or checked in our highest and truest development by our British connection. Any ideal we have as a nation may have its freest scope, so great is the liberty given us by Great Britain. Instead of being kept in leading strings, we are treated as a wellnigh grown-up daughter, the companion rather than the helpless child of our august mother across the sea. Our highest Canadian aspiration may be gratified under our present condition. If we have infelicities, and shortcomings and defects in our affairs they are matters we ourselves may remedy,

"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves."

That all this is no fool's paradise or optimist's dream may be proved by looking somewhat more in detail at our condition, and at the events of the quarter-century which has just closed.

OUR VIRTUAL INDEPENDENCE.

Until the last fifty years a system of government prevailed in all the British dependencies, which is now known as the "old colonial system." This system made the governor an autocrat, and disregarded the rights of the people. It is beside the mark to point us as British colonists of to-day to the "old colony days" of the United States a hundred and more years ago, with the Stamp act and Boston riots, and the tyranny of George III., "at whose door," says Green, "lies wholly the shame of the darkest hour of English history." It is useless to remind us of the disregard of popular rights shown by stern old Lord Dalhousie, when he dismissed Papineau, though chosen speaker by the Lower Canadian assembly, and then prorogued the recalcitrant house. It does not ruffle us to speak of Sir Francis Bond Head and his sublime disregard for popular rights, for Sir Francis so severely strained the good old idea of absolute government that it gave way, never to be restored among us.

Responsible government as the new ideal of the British colonial system was called, was introduced more than fifty years ago, and as the late Mr. Todd said, "it has become the policy of the Imperial government to withdraw from any interference with colonial legislation and administration in matters of local concern." In the new instructions given by the Imperial government on the coming of Lord Lorne to Canada in 1878 the governor-general is made a thorough exponent in Canada of the principles of the limited monarchy in England.

The great consideration shown to Canada by the Imperial government is seen in the making of treaties with foreign powers. During the greater part of the history of the Dominion Great Britain has appointed prominent Canadians to act in cases where Canada was concerned. In 1871 Sir John Macdonald was high

commissioner in the negotiations for the Washington treaty; in 1874 Hon. George Brown was appointed a commissioner, in company with the British minister, to deal with the United States on matters of trade; in 1879 Sir Alexander Galt acted as negotiator in framing a treaty with France and Spain; while in 1893 the Canadian premier, Sir John Thompson, was a commissioner at Paris on the Bering Sea case. It may be said that Canada now has a voice in all treaties in which she is concerned.

Her high commissioner at London has important functions in representing Canadian interests there, and Canada certainly has a virtual independence, united with all the advantages that come from being under the shadow of the Union Jack.

THE LARGER CANADA.

As we look back over the quarter of a century just past we plainly see that Canada's national life has been greatly strengthened by the great enterprises in which she has been engaged. A quarter of a century ago we were four millions of people, somewhat divided, largely unacquainted with one another, and with little prestige, soon to be engaged in a task as great as piling Pelion on Ossa. To undertake the work of opening up and governing the vast extent of country formerly held as a fur-trader's preserve by the Hudson's Bay company, to pledge their honor and resources for the large expenditure necessary to build a railway—the Intercolonial—to connect the inland provinces with those on the seaboard, and then to unite all the provinces from ocean to ocean by a transcontinental railway, were enterprises worthy of the Titans, which might have ruined the older provinces, but which were entered upon and accomplished with great courage and enthusiasm.

And yet it was these very perilous undertakings that made Canada what she is to-day. Note the business of the Dominion parliament and read the reports of public affairs, and it will be seen that a large proportion of all proposed and done during the quarter-century relates to the Northwest. The four original provinces of the Dominion had not sufficient scope to inspire national hope, but the thought that we have a territory more extensive than that of the United States, that we have a country whose shores are laved by the two great oceans of the earth, that there is a possibility under present conditions of building up a North American Scythia—a Scythia founded on the principles of freedom, peace and humanity, is a conception and a dream to give any people nerve, and to draw out the highest effort and the noblest hope.

Hopeless as the task seemed to the pessimists of 1881, the great necessity of a transcontinental railway became in less than ten years an accomplished fact.

The Canadian Pacific railway is a possession that we as Canadians may well rejoice over. To blast a way through our hard Laurentian rocks with nitroglycerine and dynamite, to cross, as if it were child's play, a thousand miles of prairie, to struggle with the steep western slope of the Rocky Mountains, to find a pass through what had been called the impenetrable Selkirks, and to drive the eagles from their nests on the rocky shelves of the Fraser canyon, was not only one of the greatest engineering feats of modern times, but bound our scattered provinces together by the iron band of enterprise, and gave us confidence as a people. A great imperial highway, with "one terminus at Liverpool and the other at Yokohama," the tourist's favorite route across the continent, a strong competitor for transcontinental freight, and with its branches a factor in the development and opening up of our waste lands inviting settlement, the Canadian Pacific railway, if controlled by far-sighted, patriotic and honest men, by men shrewd enough to see that not the temper of the tyrant, nor the greed of a Shylock, but the character of the settler's friend should be their aim, the Canadian Pacific railway will yet become in a higher sense than ever the crowning glory of Canadian statesmanship.

ALONGSIDE THE OTHER NATIONS.

The place and standing of Canada, as compared with other nations has also been put to the test in this very year, 1893, at the Chicago Exposition. It is of no moment to us now to discuss whether she took the best way to display her products. No doubt a great building like that of California or Illinois, where she might have all her provinces represented, including our own independent Manitoba would have been better, but possibly our resources did not admit of it.

Notwithstanding this, the appearance of Canada in agriculture, machinery, mining, anthropology, the liberal and even the fine arts, was thoroughly creditable and honorable. But as the Fair has progressed and competitions from the field, the dairy, the ranche, and the stock farm have taken place, Canada has demonstrated that as a country of farmers she has no successful competitor. The awards wrung from judges, certainly not biased in favor of Canada, have, in all things pertaining to the farm, come largely to Canada.

In this, Canada should see her true destiny. Her position in the north temperate zone, where many of the grains reach their line of most perfect production, her fertile acres, her great system of inland waters, and her carrying fleet, the fourth among the nations of the earth in tonnage, all point to the fact that Canada's destiny lies along the line of agriculture. There is no agricultural class in the world so intelligent, so well educated, so comfortable socially, so independent as

the Canadian, especially the Ontario farmers, and the Chicago exposition has vindicated this assertion. What madness it is then to discourage in any way the taste for farming found among us! It was not too commonplace for one of the greatest Latin poets to take as the subject of a great poem. Virgil in his *Georgics*, as translated by Dryden says "What makes a plenteous harvest when to turn

The fruitful soil, and when to sow the corn;
The care of sheep, of oxen, and of kine;
And how to raise on elms the teeming vine;
The birth and genius of the frugal bee;
I sing, Mæcenas, and I sing to thee."

It should be to us a special duty to magnify and make desirable the independent life of the farmer, as the basis of our Canadian life. May we not find it a profitable thing to introduce into our public schools the study of agriculture and horticulture that our rising youth may be early led into this way of wisdom. What the Northwest, the developing part of Canada wants is farmers. Our fertile prairies with their inviting acres await the great influx of European and American agriculturists. We resent the statement made lately in this city by one high in the council of the nation that our immigration has been sufficient and that we should be satisfied. Such sentiments show a want of grasp of the circumstances, and bespeak a man with soul too small for the destiny which awaits us. Let us honor farmers for they are the true representative Canadians. Let us see that the artificial conditions by which agricultural success is hampered are removed, and let the farmer have what nature intended for him "A fair field and no favor."

INCREASE OF NATIONAL UNITY.

National life shows itself in an increase of the feeling of national unity. Canada has certainly progressed in this respect in the first quarter-century of its united existence. Though the United States had on the threshold the fiery ordeal of the revolutionary war to unite them more closely, it is well known that a quarter of a century after the revolution grave doubts existed in the minds of their leading statesmen as to the future of the republic.

When we remember that a quarter of a century ago the maritime provinces were absolute strangers to the upper provinces; that the Northwest was a terra incognita to older Canada; and the trans-Alpine province was as alien to us as New Zealand, the state of things to-day is a marvel. Victoria, Vancouver, and Winnipeg business affairs are thoroughly well-known in Toronto and Montreal; the people of the maritime provinces call themselves Canadians without feeling of strangeness; even in Quebec, where French traditions are so dear, French Canadians speak the English tongue and are pervaded with British ideas as one twenty-five years ago would have thought

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impossible. Probably the best English speaker in our House of Commons to-day is the silver-tongued French Canadian, Hon. Mr. Laurier.

It is true burning questions have arisen, such as the Riel question, but it is dead; such as the Jesuits' Estate bill, but it is settled; such as the Manitoba school question, but it is likely to follow in the wake of the New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island school cases, and to become a thing of the past. French Canadians are loyal to the crown, and emulate their fellow subjects of

BRITISH BLOOD IN THEIR DEVOTION.

Canada has no such question to solve as Britain has in the Irish question, has no such conflict between the classes and the masses as Britain has, has no such difficulty as the negro problem in the Southern states, has no trouble with her Indians as the western United States has, has no arrogant silver states threatening to ruin her financial stability.

We are not maintaining that all is "couleur de rose" in Canada. There are settlers in Manitoba who are crying out of their grievances, New Brunswick we are told is far from being prosperous, the French-Canadian exodus is a serious drain. But in so far as these and other evils are remediable, we have confidence that the gathering of the wise men on Parliament Hill, Ottawa, will now or at some future time remove them.

There is a throb of common sympathy and common necessity felt from ocean to ocean. What truer symptom of the unifying spirit can be seen than the organic unions which have taken place in the religious bodies? In 1875, less than ten years after confederation, the four separate Presbyterian churches united into one great church, and the adherents of that body sing in Halifax, Winnipeg and Vancouver with equal fervor:

"From ocean to ocean
Our land shall own Thee Lord."

Nine years after, the ardent followers of Wesley joined in forming the strong Methodist church of the Dominion, and its power is felt from the Bay of Fundy to the Gulf of Georgia. In seven years more, and shortly after the close of the first quarter century of the Dominion, the Church of England, with its many dioceses, sprung from such diverse influences, has been brought together in a happy union, and the city of Winnipeg has been honored in becoming the seat of the arch prelate of that church, a token of the spirit of union coming both from Atlantic and Pacific shores. We see in all this a sign of the increasing political, commercial, social and religious union of the Dominion.

THE VOICES OF THE POETS.

Another test of national growth, and that of the most pleasing and hopeful kind is the quickening of literary life in the Dominion, since the era of Confederation.

A sense of national endeavor such as Canada has had in building up this empire of the north has shown itself in this quarter-century especially in the inspiration given to the poetic souls, who are gifted with the power to appreciate more subtle movements, and to see more deeply than their fellow mortals.

It may not be known to Canadians generally that we have in Canada at present a constellation of poets, with more true power, a loftier note of inspiration, and greater elegance of diction than is to be found in the United States. This pouring out of song is to us a sign and hopeful token of our national life in Canada.

The England of Elizabeth awakened into life the muse of Edmund Spenser, after a poetic silence of nearly 200 years, and then for a quarter of a century England became "a nest of singing birds," as her commercial, sea-going, military, social and religious life grew strong.

And so, perhaps, on a less heroic scale, but in a real way the building of our Dominion, imperfectly as some of us may have appreciated it, has touched true cords in the hearts of our noblest spirits. We name the cluster of seven, who stand out most clearly before our eyes, and notice that all of them are between the ages of 31 and 33, and so have been entirely moulded and formed under our Dominion life. Further, we would say that it is not only in the notes these have sung, but in the fact that they, with others whose names and songs might well be mentioned, are the outcome of a hope and belief that Canada has a destiny worthy of the confidence of her sons.

We shall hear a single note from each, interpreting some aspect of our Canadian life.

Referring to the feeling of gladness with which the returning Canadian sees again the great St. Lawrence, Duncan Campbell Scott, of Ottawa, a frequent contributor to the American magazines, says:

You know the joy of coming home,
After long leagues to France or Spain;
You feel the clear Canadian foam,
And the gulf water heave again.

A true poet, Frederick George Scott, author of "The Soul's Quest" and the pathetic poem of "Wahonomin" sees the heroism of the true man in Columbus as he seeks America:

"And westward with the stars in midnight sky
His strong thought travelled 'gainst the moving world.

So onward to the line of mist which curled
Around the setting sun, with steadfast eye,
He pushed his course, and trusting God on high

Threw wide the portals of a larger world."

Archibald Lampman, of Ottawa, author of the beautiful collection of poems called "Among the Millet," sings the loftier strains of the poet, seeking the nobler things for our Canadian life, and spurning the base and the sordid:

"Gold is but the juggling rod
Of a false, usurping God,

Graven long ago in hell
 With a sombre, stony spell.
 Working in the wild forever.
 Hate is not so strong to sever."

From Bliss Carman, of New Brunswick,
 noted for his graphic lyrics, and full of
 love for the flowers that bloom and the
 winds that sigh, let us hear :

CARNATIONS IN WINTER.

"Your carmine flakes of bloom to-night
 The fire of wintry sunsets hold;
 Again in dreams you burn to light
 A far Canadian garden old.

The blue north summer over it
 Is bland with long ethereal days;
 The gleaming martins wheel and flit
 Where breaks your sun down orient ways.

There, where the gradual twilight falls,
 Through quietudes of dusk afar,
 Hermit antiphonal hermit calls
 From hills below the first pale star.

Then, in you passionate love's foredoom
 Once more your spirit stirs the air,
 And you are lifted through the gloom
 To warm the coils of her dark hair."

Miss E. Pauline Johnson of Brantford, a
 descendant of Joseph Brant, sings as a
 true Canadian, and as the poetess of her
 race fading toward the west.

"West wind blow from your prairie nest,
 Blow from the mountains, blow from the west,
 The sail is idle, the sailor too;
 Oh! wind of the west, we wait for you.
 Blow! blow!

I have wooed you so,
 But never a favor you bestow;
 You rock your cradle the hills between,
 But scorn to notice my white lateen."

There is a strength worthy of our bold
 scenery in the writings of William Wil-
 ford Campbell, the author of "Lone
 Lyrics." These contain true artistic
 sketches of our Canadian lakes. Hear a
 single strain from the "Ode to
 Thunder Cape."

"Storm-beaten cliff, thou mighty cape of
 thunder;

Rock-Titan of the north, whose feet the
 waves beat under
 Cloud-reared, mist-veiled, to all the world a
 wonder,

Shut out in the wild solitude asunder,
 O! Thunder cape, thou mighty cape of
 storms."

Last of the seven, but most classic and
 patriotic is the Nova Scotian professor,
 Chas. G. D. Roberts. He is truly the laure-
 ate of Confederation:

"But thou, my country, dream not thou!
 Wake and behold how night is done,—
 How on thy breast, and o'er thy brow,
 Bursts the uprising sun."

Or again :

"Here in Canadian hearth, and home and
 name;—

This name which yet shall grow
 Till all the nations know
 Us for a patriotic people, heart and hand
 Loyal to our native earth—our own Canadian
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MANITOBA COLLEGE, WINNIPEG.

(Also author of Articles "Manitoba" and "Winnipeg," in Encyclopædia Britannica,
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